

In the Claims:

Kindly rewrite claims 1 through 8 as follows:

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1 (Amended) In a soft tissue paper machine having an essentially impermeable transfer belt (16) for conducting a soft tissue web (1) through a shoe press nip in the press section of the paper machine, and from the shoe press nip to a Yankee cylinder (5) in the dryer section of the paper machine in a closed draw, which Yankee cylinder forms, together with a transfer means (17), a transfer nip transferring the soft tissue web from the transfer belt to the Yankee cylinder, the improvement comprising an essentially impermeable transfer belt having a carrier and an elastically compressible polymer layer on its side facing the paper web, the polymer layer having a hardness between 50 and 97 Shore A and having a web-contacting surface which has a pressure-sensitive resettable degree of roughness, the web-contacting surface having a degree of roughness in a non-compressed state of $R_z = 2-80 \mu\text{m}$, measured according to ISO 4287, Part I, and a lower degree of roughness of $R_z = 0-20 \mu\text{m}$ when the polymer layer is compressed by a linear load of 20-220 kN/m applied to the essentially impermeable transfer belt as measured in a non-extended press nip.

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2. (Amended) An improvement as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that the essentially impermeable transfer belt (16) has an air permeability of less than $6 \text{ m}^3/\text{m}^2/\text{min}$, measured according to the method stated in "Standard Test Method for Air Permeability of Textile Fabrics, ASTM D 737-75, American Society of Testing and Materials".

3. (Twice Amended) An improvement as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that the polymer layer comprises a polymer composition such as acryl polymer resin, polyurethane polymer resin and polyurethane/polycarbonate polymer resin composition.

4. (Twice Amended) An improvement as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that the polymer layer comprises a particulate filler which has a hardness different from that of the polymer composition, such as kaolin clay, polymer material or metal, preferably stainless steel.

5. (Twice Amended) An improvement as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that the polymer layer completely encloses the carrier.

6. (Twice Amended) An improvement as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that the carrier is endless.